

Bills move forward

the bureaucratic red tape," McIntyre said. "As we approach this Memorial Day holiday, there can be no greater tribute to our veterans than ensuring they receive the benefits they need and deserve."

McIntyre's bill — also known as the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act — sets up a grant program for state and local veterans' outreach programs to make sure veterans are receiving the benefits they are entitled to. The Lumberton Democrat said veterans are losing out on \$22 billion in benefits a year because they are unaware of benefits or have difficulty filing claims.

"This legislation will help veterans receive all the benefits they deserve and I am thrilled it has passed the House on a bipartisan basis."

McIntyre said the bill is supported by the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, the American Legion, the VFW, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

It passed the House by a vote of 421-0. It now goes to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

The other bills focused of veterans that passed the House included:

■ H.R. 2199, which sets up care facilities at four geographically placed locations to deal with traumatic brain injury, which sponsor Rep. Michael Michaud, D-Maine,

called the "signature wound of this war" in Iraq.

The bill also orders mandatory screening of veterans for traumatic brain injury, or TBI, sets up a registry of those who show symptoms, authorizes \$70 million over four years for research into TBI and forms a committee on the care of veterans with brain injuries.

■ H.R. 612, which ensures that those who served in combat in the Persian Gulf War or later hostilities are eligible for health care for five years after their service ends, instead of the current two years. Supporters said the legislation was needed because some returning veter-

ans, particularly those with brain injuries or post-traumatic stress disorder, may not experience problems until years after they are discharged or released. It would cost \$115 million through 2012.

■ H.R. 1470, which requires that chiropractic care be available at 75 VA medical centers by the end of 2009 and all medical centers by the end of 2011.

■ H.R. 2239, which expands eligibility for vocational rehabilitation benefits for severely injured service members and allows the VA to extend vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits to injured service members before they are discharged from active duty.

The bills "keep our contract with our nation's veterans and there's no better time than just before Memorial Day to say thank you," said Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner of California.



McINTYRE

Bills aiding veterans get House stamp

McIntyre's legislation gets unanimous support

STAFF AND WIRE REPORT

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House on Wednesday marked the coming Memorial Day holiday by approving a spate of bills to benefit veterans, including one introduced by Rep. Mike McIntyre to improve state and local veterans' outreach programs.

The House also agreed to extend health care eligibility for combat veterans, provide more chiropractic care and expand screening and treatment of veterans with traumatic brain injuries.

"We need to help our veterans cut through

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